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Feature

Jersey hosts global island studies conference



Earlier this month, the island hosted the annual Island Studies Conference, bringing together 67 researchers and writers from island communities to explore the challenges and opportunities of island life. Parish correspondent **Peter Hargreaves** went to discover more about Jersey's role as a hub for research and education

JERSEY has just hosted the annual conference for those researching and writing about islands. It was organised by Dr Sue Dorman, from the Jersey International Centre of Advanced Studies (JICAS), in collaboration with the Jersey Islands from the Jersey word for island and the Small Island Culture Research Institute.

There were 67 participants from Europe, the Americas, the Caribbean, South and East Asia and Australia. Annual conferences have previously been held at various island locations, including the Faroe, Cook, New Hebrides, Norfolk, and the Channel Islands. The conference was held in Jersey.

Sessions were held in morning, noon and evening, with a short film, the middle one could only be a taste for new explorations and further investigations.

The visiting researchers and writers thought the island was wonderful, but not the volume of road traffic. Surely this is a problem that can be solved? All were impressed by the extent of our most archaeological research.

Dr Peter Pope, associate professor in palaeoarchaeology at the UCL Institute of Archaeology, spoke about the Ice Age landscape and the effects of changing sea levels in deep time. Dr Pope has previously led excavations at La Cotte in St Brelade and has worked extensively on the Ice Age landscape.

Dr Helen Gorman, a prehistoric archaeologist specialising in the study of the Neolithic landscape, explained the concept of islands and recognition of sites in Jersey as a distinct island research field in the Channel Islands. Locally, field archaeologist Dr Steve Davis-Gendron and

and, when time did not permit, getting the Sun Film, the managing editor of the Journal of Marine and Island Culture, talked about climate in English, French, covering subjects and materials comprising over 200 islanders and many more unrepresented islands, but which has experienced environmental degradation, contamination to urban, marine, and cultural life.

There were a number of studies of research and their changing dynamics, with several researchers making it extremely difficult for young people to hear or read about the island. There is deep engagement with researchers acquiring new and old maps, including a map of the island in its original form, and with the island's archaeological research, an issue of archaeological field school. This year's Island Studies Conference was the first of its kind, with the challenges faced by islands and islanders.

Dr Sue Dorman referred to Jersey being a blank slate, with some people and subjects studied, but much of its social, cultural, and environmental narrative yet to be written.

Dr Christian Flinck, a senior lecturer from the University of Amsterdam, spoke in two of a number of joint presentations. The first was on the complex history of shared island rights across the sea between Jersey and France, the second on whether sea levels can be raised on islands.

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Landspakket no ta sostenibel si sociedad civil no ta compronde nan, corda carga nan

Comunidad internacional ta reconoce investigado Franken pa trabao innovativo

Value Model, pa motibo cu esaki a resulta di no ta efectivo pa un sociedad chikito. “Na Jersey, e participantenan a aplaudi e creacion di un modelo nobo. “Esey ta algo innovativo y mi ta kere cu ta p’esey mi a gana e premio tambe y mi ta mira cu esey a lanta hopi curiosidad.”

Realidad ta cu hopi comunidad di isla chikito rond mundo ta un historia of conexion cu paisnan colonizador. Hopi tabata colonisa, unda a copia e sistema democratico di e ‘madre patria.’ “Si nos mira nos propio sistema democratico, e ta totalmente un copia di esun di Hulanda. Nunca a evalua pa mira si berdad e sistema ey ta funciona pa un tipo di democracia cu tin pa Aruba.” Mester bisa cu e tema aki a keda discuti recientemente na Universidad di Aruba bao direccion di Profesor Wouter Veenendaal di Universidad di Leiden, asocial cu Universidad di Aruba. “Participacion di sociedad civil den e debate aki ta sumamente importante.”

Franken a bisa cu conferencianan manera esun na Jersey ta yuda investigadornan manera su mes haya mas conexion cu otro den areanan similar, pa asina engrandecere conocemento. Pero tambe ta crea lasonan pa Universidad di Aruba, cu tambe ta confronta reto di ta un instituto di balor den un sociedad di isla chikito cu recursonan limita. Otro institutonan academico similar ta confronta e mesun problemanan y dor di crea lasonan por yuda otro. “Nos por ta cultura diferente, cu idioma diferente, pero e retonan ta similar.” Esakinan ta entre otro limitacion di experticio local, ademas cu esnan cu tin responsabilidadnan crucial hopi biaha



mester bisti diferente pechi e mesun momento. “Nos ta mira problemanan similar pa yega na bon gobernacion y e falta di ‘manpower’ pa modernisa y traha ley necesario. Actualmente hopi sociedad di isla chikito ta opera den un cuadro anticua, mientras cu e retonan ta nobo y ta bira mas grandi y e hermentnan mes ta anticua, mientras cu ngo’s mester funciona cu poco fondo y poco experticio.”

Pues, e factornan aki ta haci sociedadnan di isla chikito, cu pa naturalesa ya ta vulnerable, mas fragil ainda. “E pandemia di Covid a ilustra con vulnerable sociedadnan di isla chikito ta y cu en realidad, nos ta depende di siguridad y estabilidad di Reino Hulandes, cu ta haci mas dificil ainda pa resolve temanan cu pa decadanan continuamente ta bira mas grandi. Mi no ta kere cu nos tin mas reto, sino cu nan ta mas exponi y organisacionnan no por ignora nan mas.”

Landspakket
Tabata durante e pandemia cu

Hulanda a ofrece ayudo, pero cu condicion stricto, den forma di e asina yama landspakketten, cu tabata impone riba e islanan. No obstante cu e intencion por tabata bon, realidad ta cu segun Franken, sociedad civil na Aruba no a compronde e landspakketten. “Si ngo’s no ta compronde e landspakket, no sa kico e ta contene y kico nan contribucion ta den e landspakket y kico e impacto di e landspakket ta riba nan, anto no por cuminza e discusion mes. Eynan ta mira con e falta di acceso na informacion y falta di comprension den nivel di gobernacion, tambe na nivel di Reino ta haci cu ngo’s no ta confortabel, corda pa cuestiona y bin cu idea propio. P’esey ta importante pa nan ta fuerte, pasobra si nan ta e wes’i lomba di comunidad, y nan ta e ‘mouthpiece’ pa Gobierno, nan mester ta fuerte pa defende nan mes. Y mayoria di e temanan di e landspakket ta referi na rol di organisacionnan di sociedad civil, esta e ngo’s. “Pero si puntra nan con nan ta mira nan mes den implementacion di e landspakket, y con nan ta prepara, e reaccion ta hopi limita. Y esey ta mi empeño, pa nos empodera ngo’s pa asina por fin por logra bon gobernacion na Aruba, y pa Reino Hulandes ta mas fuerte, igual, cu manehonan cu ta sostene desaroyo sostenibel di tur partner. Tur mester ta igual den conocimiento y experticio. Tanten cu desbalansa, semper lo sigui tin un partner cu ta mas fuerte cu otro y cu ta sigui impone.”

E ta e stem nobo den estudio di isla. Thaïs Franken, MSc, investigado academico a bira recientemente recipiente di e premio ‘New Voices in Island Studies’ pa 2025 durante e Small Islands Culture Research Initiative, SICRI, na Jersey. Y si tin un aspecto cu ta resalta, Aruba no ta unico den e retonan pa yega na bon gobernacion. Es mas, nos como isla tin similaridad cu otro rond mundo.

Franken a registra for di 2024 caba pa participa na e Island Studies Conference cu a tuma luga na Juni ultimo, pa presenta e prome parti di su investigacion doctoral ‘Crea balor for di abao (Creating Values from the ground up)’ Asina el a haya oportunidad pa presenta na Juni ultimo. E importancia di e conferencia ta cu ta haya oportunidad pa intercambia conocemento cu otro investigadonan y personanan cu ta traha maneho pa sociedadnan di isla chikito. “Ta hendenan cu ta investiga e fenomeno di isla chikito y su retonan. Por ehempel, ma conoce diferente academico y investigado cu ta enfoca riba impacto di cambio di clima.” E tema cu Franken a delibera riba dje tabata parti di su investigacion cientifico, particularmente e area di cultura.

E premio ta pa reconoce Thaïs Franken como un aca-

